

An ANT there was, whose forward prate
 Controll'd all matters in debate:
 Whether he knew the thing or no;
 His tongue eternally would go;
 For he had impudence at will,
 And boasted universal skill.
 Ambition was his point in view.
 Thus, by degrees, to pow'r he grew.
 Behold him now his drift attain—
 He's made the treasurer of the grain.
 But, as their ancient laws are just,
 And punish breach of public trust,
 'Twas order'd (lest wrong application
 Should starve that wise industrious nation)
 The gran'ry-keeper should explain,
 And balance his account of grain.
 He brought (since he could not refuse 'em)
 Some scraps of paper to amuse 'em.
 An honest pismire, warm with zeal,

In justice to the public weal,
 Thus spoke— "The nation's hoard is low.
 "From whence does this profusion flow?
 "I know our annual fund's amount.
 "Why such expence, and where's th' account?"
 With wonted arrogance and pride,
 The ANT in office thus replied.
 "Consider, Sirs, were secrets told,
 "How could the best schemed projects hold?
 "Should we state mysteries disclose,
 "Twould lay us open to our foes.
 "My duty and my well known zeal
 "Bid me our present schemes conceal.
 "Consider, when invasion's near,
 "Intelligence must cost us dear;
 "And in this ticklish situation,
 "A secret told betrays the nation.
 "But, on my honour, all th' expence,
 "Though vast, was for the swarm's defence."
 GAY'S Fables, Part II.—Fab. IV.

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PARLIAMENTARY CENSURE

ON

LORD VISCOUNT MELVILLE.

Previous to any remarks upon this important proceeding, it may not, with respect to foreigners, and even with respect to many of our own countrymen, be unnecessary to observe, that the person, now known by the title of LORD VISCOUNT MELVILLE, is that HENRY DUNDAS, Esq. who was formerly a lawyer in Edinburgh; who became Lord Advocate of Scotland during the American war; who was a supporter of Lord North's administration; who was made Treasurer of the Navy at the same time that Mr. Pitt first became Chancellor of the Exchequer, in Lord Shelburne's administration; who again became Treasurer of the Navy in the administration of Mr. Pitt, in 1784; who afterwards became President of the Board of Control for India affairs, and afterwards Secretary of State for the department of war, retaining all the three offices in his own person, till the year 1800, when he gave up the Treasurership of the Navy, still retaining the other two offices, till he resigned together with Mr. Pitt and the rest of that ministry in the month of March, 1801.—This is the person, who, being again brought into place by Mr. Pitt, and put in possession of greater power than ever, has now been degraded by a censure, inflicted by a solemn decision of the Commons House of Parliament, of which proceeding I shall first give an account, and shall then trouble the reader with such remarks as appear to me calculated to turn his attention towards those further inquiries

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and further legislative proceedings, which are now become obviously necessary to the safety of the nation.—On Monday, the 8th instant, Mr. Whitbread, agreeably to notice before given, entered, in a speech of great length, into the subject of the conduct of Lord Melville, as exhibited in the Tenth Report of the Naval Commissioners, at the end of which speech he submitted the following resolutions to the House.

I. That it appears to this Committee; that, on the 18th of June, 1782, the House of Commons in a Committee of the whole House came, amongst others, to the following Resolutions:—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that some regulations ought to be adopted for the purpose of lessening and keeping down the balances of public money which appear to have usually been in the hands of the Treasurer of the Navy: and it would be beneficial to the public if the first and other Clerks in the different branches belonging to the said Office were paid by fixed and permanent salaries in lieu of all fees, gratuities, and other perquisites whatsoever.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that from henceforward the Paymaster General of his Majesty's Land Forces, and the Treasurer of the Navy, for the time being, shall not apply any sum or sums of money impressed to them, or either of them, to any purpose of advantage or interest to themselves, either directly or indirectly.—That it appears to this Committee, that the Commissioners appointed to examine, take and state the public accounts of the kingdom, have, so far as appears from the reports which they have hitherto made, dis-

charged the duty entrusted to them with great diligence, accuracy and ability; and if Parliament shall carry into execution those plans of reform and regulation which are suggested by the matter contained in the Reports of the said Commissioners, it cannot but be attended with the most beneficial consequences to the future welfare and prosperity of this kingdom.

II. That in furtherance of the intention of the House of Commons expressed in such resolutions, his Majesty by his warrant dated June 26th, 1782, directed that the salary of the Treasurer of the Navy should be increased to the sum of 4000 l. per annum, in full satisfaction of all wages and fees, and other profits and emoluments theretofore enjoyed by former Treasurers.

III. That it appears to this Committee, that during the Treasurership of the Right Honourable Isaac Barre, the conditions of the aforesaid warrant were strictly complied with; that the whole of the money issued from the Exchequer to Mr. Barre for naval services was lodged in the Bank: that it was never drawn from thence previously to its being advanced to the Sub-Accountants, to be applied to the public service: that during the time Mr. Barre acted as Treasurer and Ex-Treasurer, he had not in his possession or custody any of the public money, and that neither he nor the Paymaster of the Navy did derive any profit or advantage from the use or employment thereof.

IV. That the Right Honourable Henry Dundas, now Lord Viscount Melville, succeeded to the office of Treasurer of the Navy on the 19th of August, 1782, when a further addition was made to the salary of the said office, in order to produce a net annual income of 4,000 l. after the payment of all taxes and charges on the same; and that this additional salary was considered by the said Lord Viscount Melville as granted to him in lieu of all wages, fees, profits and other emoluments enjoyed by former Treasurers.

V. That the said Lord Viscount Melville continued in the said office till the 10th of April, 1783; that being asked whether he derived any advantage from the use of the public money during that period, he in his examination before the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry, declined answering any question on that head; but that he has in a letter since written to the said Commissioners, and dated the 28th of March last, declared that previous to 1786, "He did not derive any advantage from the use or employment of any money issued for carrying

on the service of the Navy;" but Mr. Douglas, who was Paymaster, being dead, and his Lordship having refused to answer any questions on this head as aforesaid, no evidence has been obtained as to the application of monies issued for the service of the Navy, or the mode of drawing the same from the Bank during this period.

VI. That the Honourable C. Townshend, now Lord Bayning, held the office of Treasurer of the Navy, from the 11th April, 1783, to the 4th of January, 1784, and that from the examination of his Lordship it appears that during his Treasurership no part of the money issued for the service of the Navy, was applied to his private use or advantage, and that he does not believe that Mr. Douglas, who acted under him as paymaster, derived any profit or advantage from the use or employment of the public money, except the money issued for the payment of Exchequer fees.

VII. That the Right Honourable Henry Dundas was re-appointed Treasurer of the Navy on the 5th of January, 1784, and continued in the said office until the 1st of June, 1800.

VIII. That in the year 1785 an Act of Parliament was passed 25 Geo. 3. chap. 31, intituled "An Act for better regulating the Office of the Treasurer of his Majesty's Navy;" whereby it is directed, that no money shall be issued from the Treasury to the Treasurers of the Navy; but that all monies issued for naval services shall be paid to the Bank on account of naval services, and placed to the account of the Treasurer of the Navy, and shall not be paid out of the Bank unless for naval services, and in pursuance of drafts signed by the Treasurer, or some person or persons authorised by him; which drafts shall specify the heads of service to which such sums are to be applied, and that the regulations under the said Act shall take place from the 31st July, 1785.

IX. That the execution of the said act was postponed till the month of January, 1784, and that, from that time till the month of June, 1800, when Lord Melville left the office of Treasurer, contrary to the practice established in the Treasurership of the Right Honourable Isaac Barre, contrary to the resolutions of the House of Commons, of the 18th of June, 1782, and in defiance of the provisions of the above-mentioned Act, of the 25th Geo. III. Chap. 31. large sums of money were, under pretence of Naval Services, and by a manifest evasion of the Act, at various times drawn from the Bank and invested in Exchequer and Navy Bills,



lent upon the security of Stock, employed in discounting private bills, in purchasing Bank and East India Stock, and used in various ways for the purposes of private emolument.

X. That Alexander Trotter, Esq. the Paymaster of the Navy, was the person, by whom, or in whose name the Public Money was thus employed, and that in so doing he acted with the knowledge and consent of Lord V. Melville, to whom he was at the same time private agent, and for whose use or benefit he occasionally laid out from 10 to 20,000 l. without considering whether he was previously in advance to his Lordship, and whether such advances were made from his public or private balance.

XI. That the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Melville having been privy to, and connived at the withdrawing from the Bank of England, for purposes of private interest or emolument, sums issued to him as Treasurer of the Navy, and placed to his account in the Bank, according to the provisions of the 25th of Geo. III. Chap. 31, has been guilty of a gross violation of the law, and a high breach of duty.

XII. That it further appears, that subsequent to the appointment of Lord Melville, as Treasurer of the Navy in 1784, and during the time he held that office, large sums of Money issued for the service of the Navy, were applied to other services, and that the said Lord Melville, in a letter, written in answer to a Precept issued by the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry, requiring an Account of Money received by him, or any person on his account, or by his order from the Paymaster of the Navy, and also of the time when, and the persons by whom the same were returned to the Bank, or Paymaster; has declared that he has no materials by which he could make up such an Account, and that if he had materials, he could not do it without disclosing delicate and confidential transactions of Government, which his duty to the Public must have restrained him from revealing.

XIII. That Lord Melville in applying Monies issued for the service of the Navy to other services, stated to have been of so delicate and confidential a nature, that in his opinion, no Account can, or ought to be given of them, has acted in a manner inconsistent with his duty, and incompatible with those securities which the Legislature has provided for the proper application of the Public Money.

The Speaker having put the question upon the first of the resolutions, Mr. Pitt rose, and, in a speech of several hours, urged the

necessity of further inquiry, previous to any decision on the part of the House; and, in order to make such inquiry, he proposed to appoint a select committee consisting of members of the House. The motion he proposed was as follows: "That a select committee be appointed to consider the Tenth Report of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry, and the documents therewith connected; that they examine the same, and report their opinion thereon." This motion Mr. Fox objected to altogether, because, if it were carried, the resolutions of Mr. Whitbread would not be recorded in the journals of the House. Whereupon Mr. Pitt agreed first to move the previous question. Lord Henry Petty (son of the Marquis of Lansdowne) opposed the motion of Mr. Pitt, and, in a very animated and masterly speech answered the arguments of that gentleman. The Attorney General followed Lord Henry Petty, and took the side of the ministers. Mr. Tierney spoke on the side of Mr. Whitbread. Mr. Canning (the present treasurer of the navy) spoke for the ministers; Mr. George Ponsonby spoke against the ministers. The Master of the Rolls followed on the side of the ministers; Mr. Fox spoke against the ministers; Lord Castlereagh (the president of the Board of Control) for the ministers; Lord Audover against the ministers; Mr. Wilberforce against the ministers; Sir C. Price against the ministers; Mr. Wallace (one of the lords of the admiralty) for the ministers; Lord Archibald Hamilton against the ministers. — A division then took place

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The numbers being even, the Speaker, after a short and dignified speech, in which he stated the reasons for the vote he was about to give, gave his vote against the motion of Mr. Pitt; and thus were the ministers left in a minority of one. — The House then returned to Mr. Whitbread's resolutions, the first ten of which were carried without opposition; but, when the Speaker put the *eleventh*, Mr. Pitt moved, by way of amendment, to leave out the words, "*gross violation of the law and a high breach of duty*," and to insert in lieu of them, the words, "*contrary to the intention of the law*." On this a debate of short speeches took place. Mr. Grey contended for the original resolution; and Mr. Pitt withdrew his amendment, and moved to insert, after the word "*emolument*," the words, "*to Mr. Trotter*." Sir William Pultney said, he thought this would be reasonable, pro-

viled the words, "*as acknowledged by Lord Melville*," were inserted after the words "*Bank of England*." Mr. Whitbread having no particular objection to this, the resolution was then read from the chair, and stood as follows. "That the Rt. Hon. Lord Viscount Melville having been privy to, and connived at, the withdrawing from the Bank of England (*as acknowledged by Lord Melville*) for purposes of private interest or emolument, to Mr. Trotter, sums issued to him as treasurer of the navy, and placed to his account at the Bank, according to the provisions of the 25th Geo. III. cap. 31. has been guilty of a gross violation of the law, and a high breach of duty." Mr. Windham positively objected to these amendments, and contended, that the resolution ought to be left as it originally stood. Mr. Fox took the same ground, and Mr. Wilberforce, rising with the exclamation, "Sir, this is too bad!" said, that not to brand the transaction as a gross violation of the law would be ignominious to the House. Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Bistard and Mr. Grenville said the same. Mr. Pitt did, however, persist in his amendment, but the question being put, on the original motion, and the Speaker declaring that the *ayes* had it, Mr. Pitt shrunk from the division. The *twelfth* and *thirteenth* resolutions were not put, as they belong to a subject of future discussion.—— Mr. Whitbread then said, that he had, of course, a motion to make for an address to His Majesty to remove Lord Melville from his presence and councils; but that the hour was now too late. Mr. Pitt moved, that the House should adjourn to Wednesday the 10th instant; but Mr. Fox thought, seeing that the country was now in the hands of a *disgraced ministry*, the House ought not to adjourn over a single day. At length, it was agreed, that the adjournment should be till Wednesday, provided that no other business should be entered on previous to the resuming of that which was now in hand.—— On Wednesday, when the House met, Mr. Pitt informed them, that, in consequence of the resolutions of the House, passed on Monday, Lord Melville had tendered his *resignation* to His Majesty, by whom it had been *graciously accepted*. Mr. Whitbread thereupon said, that it would, nevertheless, be necessary to address the King to remove that Lord from his presence and councils for ever; but, it appearing to the House, that that object was already substantially secured, and Mr. Pitt declaring, that it was to be, as a matter of course, understood, that Lord Melville never could again enjoy any post of public trust or confidence, Mr. Whitbread

refrained from urging his motion, and contented himself with moving, that the resolutions of Monday be presented to His Majesty by the whole House; which motion was agreed to without a division.—— At the same time, Mr. Whitbread gave notice, that, after the Easter recess, he should submit two motions to the House; one for the purpose of obtaining the appointment of a committee to inquire further into the subject matter of the Tenth Report of the Naval Commissioners; and, the other, for ordering the Attorney General to prosecute Lord Melville and Mr. Trotter for in order to recover that which the public had lost by their conduct, and, in the mean time, for restraining their persons and property.—— Mr. Serjeant Best gave notice of a motion upon the subject of the 11th report.—— The remarks, which I have to submit upon these proceedings, will, perhaps, contain little that can have any claim to novelty; but, it is, after the close of a widely extended discussion, always of some use to bring the principal points into one view, and so to arrange them, that persons, not having the command of all the channels of information, shall be able to form a clear notion of each, and a correct judgment upon the whole of the subject. With a view of affording this aid to my readers, particularly those at a distance from the metropolis, I shall divide what I have to say under the following heads: 1. The conduct out of doors, of those who have maintained the justice of a vote of censure against Lord Melville. 2. The object of the proposed select committee. 3. The fact of a wilful violation of the law by Lord Melville. 4. The actual pecuniary loss to the public from the misconduct of Lord Melville. 5. Lord Melville's carelessness of wealth. 6. The fact of Lord Melville's participating with Mr. Trotter. 7. The misemployment of the Naval money with the connivance of Mr. Pitt.—— FIRST: it appears to me an outrageous insult to the public, to a burdened and a wronged people, to ascribe their resentment against Lord Melville to any thing but a due sense of the injuries they have suffered at his hands. Mr. Canning conjured the House "not to be led away by prejudice within and by *intimidation* and *clamour* from without." What could that gentleman mean by *clamour* and *intimidation*? What *clamour* has been heard? What attempt at intimidation has been made? But, let us hear Mr. Pitt. "I complain," said he, "that the hon. gent. has endeavoured to mislead the public by endeavouring to circulate the notion that great additions have been made to the public burdens, when no such additions

" have in the smallest degree taken place.
 " for he knows that not a shilling has been
 " lost to the public—(Hear! Hear!)—that
 " no allegation of any such loss has been
 " mentioned in the report, and that, in fact,
 " no mischief whatever has resulted from
 " this transaction—(A roar of Hear! Hear!
 " from the opposition benches)—Sir, the
 " House must be sensible that it is very
 " little consistent with the moderation and
 " candour that ought to accompany a se-
 " rious charge of this nature, to proceed
 " with such violence and interrupt a mem-
 " ber with clamour. But they need not
 " expect to interrupt me with such noise,
 " which I must consider as an attempt to
 " influence the passions of the House; and
 " I have the less doubt on the subject, when
 " I recollect the numberless misrepresenta-
 " tions *both in and out of the House* on this
 " affair; misrepresentations which have
 " been attended with no little mischief. It
 " has been stated, *not only that a very con-
 " siderable loss has been sustained*, but that
 " *our seamen have, in consequence of the
 " transactions now before us, been prevented
 " from receiving in proper time the money due
 " to their valour and their meritorious services.*
 " (No! No! from the opposition) There
 " has not been the slightest grounds for
 " saying any such thing, for I can safely aver
 " that the delay of an hour has never taken
 " place in paying such money, and I do,
 " therefore, most grievously, and justly
 " complain, that this affair has not been
 " treated with proper candour and modera-
 " tion." As to the question of *actual loss* to
 " the public, and consequent additional bur-
 " dens, these topics belong to a subsequent
 " head; but, who, till this speech was made,
 " ever heard of any "clamour out of doors?"
 " Who ever heard, that it was represented,
 " that the *sailors' pay* was, on account of these
 " malversations, detained from them? I never
 " heard of any such thing; and, if such a no-
 " tion was really entertained and propagated,
 " who was to blame for it, and who would
 " have been answerable for the consequences?
 " Who but those, whose criminal conduct had
 " afforded the grounds for the suspicions,
 " whence such a misrepresentation arose? But,
 " after all, was it a misrepresentation? If bills
 " drawn upon Somerset House, for provisions
 " for the navy, were not duly paid; if those,
 " who ought to have paid bills upon the sick and
 " hurt boards, did not duly pay those bills; if
 " this was the case, and for years together, is it
 " not possible, at least; nay, will any one say,
 " that it is not likely, that demands for sea-
 " men's wages may have been delayed? At
 " any rate, the misrepresentation, if any, can

be fairly attributed to nobody but the per-
 sons, whose established malversation created
 the suspicion. As to the *press*, let any one,
 who is able, point out the passage, where the
 conduct of Lord Melville has been misrep-
 resented to his disadvantage. The Morning
 Chronicle, The Times, and The Morning
 Advertiser, have, with a degree of talent
 and zeal that does them great honour, es-
 poused the cause of the nation; but, has
 Lord Melville and the ministry been without
 their advocates? Has not the Morning Post,
 the Sun, the Oracle, the Courier, and the
 Morning Herald, been engaged in a defence
 of his lordship from the moment his conduct
 was attacked? Will it be believed that *the
 means* of procuring defenders of this sort
 have been spared? And, as to "clamour,"
 let the language of these latter prints be re-
 verted to; and, if any thing half so clamo-
 rous, so abusive, so menacing, so evidently
 intended to *intimidate*, can be found in any
 other prints, upon any occasion whatever,
 then will I confess, that Lord Melville has
 been unfairly treated. Of *pamphlets* none
 has been published against Lord Melville.
 Even the Tenth Report itself has found no
 bookseller bold enough to furnish an edi-
 tion to gratify the curiosity of the public;
 but, Lord Melville has not wanted a pam-
 phleteer to take up his cause, and, from his
 performance, issuing from the shop of a
 bookseller *professedly ministerial*, I will make
 a few extracts, whence the public will be
 able to judge of the reasonableness of the
 complaint of Mr. Canning and Mr. Pitt.
 The publication alluded to is entitled,
 " *Strictures on the Tenth Report, &c.*" The
 writer ascribes the report to "the *malice, ig-
 norance, or folly, of a quorum of cold-blood-
 ed inquisitors.*" He talks of the "*calum-
 nies of accredited official reports.*" Men
 in power, he says, "will not find that the
 "*loose libels of the Tenth Report have had
 " the effect of turning every mind in the
 " country from an experienced statesman,
 " so as to wish him removed from office,
 " only to give place to some tyrant of the
 " quarter-deck If the Tenth Report
 " be famous, so are the acts of Nero and
 " Caligula. Already have they" [the
 " Commissioners] "produced little less than
 " *mutinies* in most of the departments in the
 " naval service. The Tenth Report is,
 " from beginning to end, almost a *tissue of
 " calumnies.* It is a report levelled, not
 " merely at the reputations of the first and
 " ablest ministers of the Crown, but at the
 " *peace and well-being of the country.*
 " It has visited the tomb for victims, to
 " *satiates the lust for scandal, of a faction of**

“hot-headed, unlearned tyrants The Commissioners [would, if they could, have hurled the Treasurer down a precipice “ for the gratification of rope-yarn Lords, and “ jolly-boat ministers of state All *sa- vages* possess a *brutal thirst for blood*, which renders them, to a given point, as resolute in combat as if they were really brave. The first lord at the Ottoman Admiralty Board may, in this way, be as brave as Lord St. Vincent At the Admiralty Board it was with him as a fish out of water. The halt, the lame, and the blind, were alike indiscriminately objects of *vengeance*—The Admiralty will long be stained with the *blood* of its victims. The reign of the Jervis’s and the Markhams will long be notorious. . . . One of the first practical statesmen of our age and nation is to be disgraced on the *calumnies* and *overcharged reports* of a batch of gentlemen economists of the St. Vincent school. . . . On my *soul*, I do most conscientiously believe I have done the Commissioners *no sort of injustice*.” After this, the reader will not be surprised to hear the author conclude with recommending a *caning* for the backs of these Commissioners. “In private life such violence and rudeness” [as the examining of Mr. Antrobus and Mark Sprott] “would have been chastised with a wholesome *bit of baxle-tree*, laid on gently, up and down, under the windows of the insulted parties. But, what is done by Commissioners no man will think to requite by a *caning*.”—Such has been the language of the gentle partizans of the feeble and oppressed Lord Melville! There is, in such cases, nothing like coming to the proof; nothing like citing the *instances*. In the Oracle newspaper, of the 28th ultimo, there was something in the form of verse, accusing every distinguished person, supposed to be hostile to Lord Melville, of the most base and wicked motives, and concluding with an exhortation to them to find out some new *falsehood* wherewith to glut their *hellish rage*.” The Sun of 23d ultimo menaces those, who have written against Lord Melville, with the *vengeance of the law*. This, indeed, is clamour. This is, indeed, an attempt to intimidate; and, I defy the partizans of Lord Melville and Mr. Pitt to point out anything resembling it in any publication, which has taken the contrary side. The *voice* of the people! Has that been heard in a clamorous tone? The livery of London requested their Mayor to convene a Common Hall, in order to give them an opportunity of expressing their opinions

relative to the abuses that had been brought to light in the Treasurership of the Navy. Their Mayor made them wait three days for an answer, and then postponed the convening of the Hall for ten or twelve days longer. It has not yet been convened; but we have heard no *clamour*. A requisition has been made, it is said, to the Sheriff of Middlesex to call a county-meeting. It has not been called; yet, can any man say, that there has been a clamour in Middlesex? If, indeed, *no Melville and Pitt* had been written upon the doors of the parliament house, and upon all the walls leading to it, as “*no popery*” was written immediately after the Roman Catholic petition was presented by Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox, then, indeed, there might have been some ground for the complaint about clamour; then, indeed, it might have been said, that some dark, under-hand, cowardly hireling had been at work to prepossess the minds of the people, to mislead them, to raise a popular outcry, to prevent the members of the parliament from following the unbiassed dictates of their minds, and thus, by the basest of all arts, to stifle the voice of truth and justice. But, by those who have espoused the cause of the nation, against its mighty plunderers, no such arts have been used. Appeals have been made to the people and to the parliament; but, the cause has been much too good to stand in need of the aid of misrepresentation. It has, indeed, been no party matter, either in or out of doors. Those amongst us, who have not felt that we had an *interest* in prolonging abuses, in protecting the plunderers of the nation, have, in truth, been pleading each of us his *own cause*; for, we all know, that if there be plunder, we must contribute towards it, every one in proportion to his means. Upon this part of the subject, Mr. Pitt did, indeed, receive a most seasonable rebuke from Mr. Wilberforce: “If the right hon. gent.” said he, “really regards it as *clamour*, he deceives himself most grievously. It is not clamour; it is the voice of the sober, the honest, the thinking part of the community, calmly, but, at the same time, firmly, expressed.” Suppose, however, there had been a little, and even a great deal, of clamour, upon this occasion, could the people have been blamed? Must not some of them recollect the time when Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dondas were the champions of reform; of rigid integrity in office; of strict adherence to law; of economy even to pence and farthings? Nay, must they not recollect, that it was upon professions of this sort that

those two persons rose to the topmost heights of power and emolument? We have *not* clamoured. Not a man of us has clamoured. We have only demanded justice; and, we have, as we had a right to do, demanded security for the future. We have been, and we are, ready to make any sacrifice that the safety and honour of our country requires; but at the moment, when we are called on for those sacrifices, shall we be accused of clamouring, of indulging in "vulgar passion," if we complain, nay, if we bitterly inveigh, against conduct like that of which Lord Melville has been convicted? And, shall we be told this, too, by Mr. Pitt, the person who calls on us for those sacrifices, and by Mr. Canning, who does us the honour to receive a salary of four thousand a year as treasurer of the navy, and, probably, six hundred a year more for the sinecure place mentioned in the "PLAIN REPLY," and whose sisters are, in that publication, stated to receive each of them a pension from the public exchequer?—THE SECOND point to be remarked on is, *the object of the proposed select committee.* And, to know what the real object must have been, we have not much more to do, than to recollect, that it would have been composed of persons, *to none of whom the ministers would have had any objection.* What could any committee have discovered to add to the reasons, upon which the House passed a censure on Lord Melville? Nothing. He had been guilty of a gross violation of the law. He acknowledged it. So far, therefore, the information was complete. Whether he had actually participated in the profits of Mr. Trotter was not quite *proved*: but it was not necessary to prove that, in order to justify the resolutions proposed to the House. But, the proposed committee would have been every thing to Lord Melville. It would have procured a long delay. Other objects of importance would have come before the public. Fresh pieces of chalk would, probably, have directed our attention to "*no popery*" upon the doors of the Parliament House. In short, it is very likely we should have heard no more of the Tenth Report, at least during the present session of parliament.—THE THIRD point relates to the *INTENTION of the violated law.* The Master of the Rolls stated the main object of the committee to be, to inquire what was the real *intention* of the act of the 25th of the King, chapter 31, and whether that had been violated; and if violated, whether it had been done wilfully. Of this, too, Mr. Canning said much; and, it will be recol-

lected, that Mr. Pitt proposed to introduce, into the eleventh resolution, the words, "*contrary to the INTENTION of the law,*" instead of the words, "*gross violation of the law, and high breach of duty.*" This is a most material point; for, if there were room to suppose it *at all probable*, that the law was *misunderstood* by Mr. Dundas, now Lord Melville, I should hold myself extremely unjust in expressing myself as I have done respecting that person's conduct. But, if the reader will follow me through a brief sketch of the history of the act in question, I am persuaded he will entirely acquit me of having shown, in this respect, any want of that fairness which should ever distinguish discussions of this sort.—Towards the close of the American war, when the nation became sorely oppressed by the burdens occasioned thereby, petitions were, from all parts of the country, presented to parliament, praying for a reform in the expenditure of the public money. Some steps, towards accomplishing this object, were taken previous to the dismissal of Lord North. In the year 1782, Lord Rockingham being prime minister, and Mr. Fox one of the secretaries of state, a set of resolutions were moved by Lord John Cavendish, and were passed by the House of Commons, of which resolutions the following related to the office of treasurer of the navy. "That it is the opinion of this committee, that from henceforward the paymaster general of His Majesty's land forces, and the *treasurer of the navy* for the time being, shall not apply any sum or sums of money imprested to them, or either of them, to *any purpose or advantage or interest to themselves, either directly or indirectly.*" Observe, that this resolution was passed on the 18th of June, 1782, Lord Melville then being engaged in the correction of abuses in India, and Mr. Pitt being one of the loudest in the House of Commons against all sorts of malversation and of lavish expenditure. In the month of July, 1782, a change of ministry took place. Lord Shelburne became first lord of the treasury; and then came together, *never to separate in this world*, the Right Honourable William Pitt and the Right Honourable Henry Dundas, the former chancellor of the exchequer, and the latter treasurer of the navy. That administration did not last so many months. It was followed by that of the Duke of Portland, Mr. Fox being one of the secretaries of state, Mr. Burke paymaster of the forces, and the Honourable Charles Townshend, now Lord Bayning, treasurer of the navy. The reader will remember, that that ministry was overset by

Mr Pitt and Mr. Dundas; and, that the chief means by which they effected their purpose, was, an opposition to the bill proposed by Mr. Fox relating to India, an opposition grounded on the assertion, that, *if the bill passed, the East-India Company would be reduced to a cypher*; that very Company, which, as the Directors have now openly declared in parliament, *has been really reduced to a cypher* by the measures of Messrs. Pitt and Dundas! — To return to the Duke of Portland's ministry; short as its duration was, Mr. Burke found time for introducing the bill relative to the office of paymaster of the forces, which bill has been acted upon in that office ever since — I shall here insert all that part of this bill which will apply to the present purpose; and I beg the reader to observe, that, in order to form a true judgment, it will be necessary for him to read all these documents with great attention.

“ACT XXII. GEO. III. CAP. 81.

An act for the better regulation of the office of paymaster general of his Majesty's forces.

WHEREAS it appears, by the reports made by the commissioners appointed to examine, take, and state the public accounts of the kingdom, that the paymasters of the forces have heretofore been accustomed to accumulate large sums of public money in their hands, beyond what was necessary for carrying on the services in their department, and to take and carry out of office with them, upon their resignation or removal, large balances of public money, which they have retained and kept in their hands many years after being out of office: and whereas it is highly expedient that a remedy should be provided for these inconveniences; be it therefore enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the first day of January, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three, the paymaster general of his Majesty's forces for the time being, in all memorials to be by him presented to the treasury for money for army services, shall pray that such sum as he requires may be issued to the governor and company of the bank of England on his account, specifying, in every such memorial, the sum he requires, and for what particular service or services; and the commissioners of his Majesty's treasury for the time being, by their letter from time to time shall direct the auditor of the exchequer to issue to the governor and company

of the bank of England, on account of the paymaster general of his Majesty's forces, naming such paymaster general for the time being, the sum for which such letter shall be drawn upon the unsatisfied order at the exchequer in favour of the said paymaster general, for which the receipt of the cashier or cashiers of the said governor and company shall be a sufficient discharge; and all sums for which such letters of the commissioners of his Majesty's treasury shall be drawn, shall be issued to the governor and company of the bank of England, in like manner as they have been heretofore issued to the paymaster general of his Majesty's forces; and all such monies so to be issued to the governor and company of the bank of England, shall be placed to an account to be raised in the books of the governor and company of the said bank of England, and to be intitled, *The Account of the Paymaster General of his Majesty's Forces*; inserting the name of such paymaster general for the time being.

II. And be it enacted, That no fees whatsoever shall be paid at the exchequer or treasury for or by reason of the transactions aforesaid, beyond the amount of what hath usually been paid upon imprests and accounts hitherto made, according to the former custom of transacting business between the exchequer, pay office, and bank severally.

III. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That from and after the said first day of January, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three, no money for the service of the army shall be issued from his Majesty's exchequer to the paymaster general of his Majesty's forces, or shall be placed, or directed to be placed, in his hands or possession, but the same shall be issued and directed to be paid to the governor and company of the bank of England, and to be placed to the account above-mentioned.

IV. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the paymaster general of his Majesty's forces for the time being, by himself or his deputy, or the person or persons in his office duly authorised by the said paymaster general, from and after the said first day of January, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three, shall draw upon the governor and company of the bank of England for all army services whatever, and shall specify in each and every draft the particular service for which the same is drawn; and no draft of the said paymaster, or his deputy, or the person or persons authorized as aforesaid, shall

be deemed a sufficient voucher to the said governor and company of the bank of *England*, unless the same specifies the service for which it is drawn, and has been actually paid by the said governor and company of the bank of *England*.

V. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the monies so to be issued to the governor and company of the bank of *England*, on account of the paymaster general of his Majesty's forces, shall not be paid out of the bank unless for the army services, and in pursuance of drafts or cheque papers, to be drawn on the governor and company of the Bank of *England*, and signed by the paymaster general of his Majesty's forces for the time being, or his deputy, or the person or persons authorized as aforesaid; in which drafts shall be specified the heads of service to which the sums therein mentioned are to be applied; and which drafts so drawn shall be sufficient authority to the bank to pay such money to the persons mentioned in such drafts, or to the bearer of them."

This act was, it will be perceived by the preamble, grounded upon the reports of a Board of Commissioners, appointed to examine, take, and state the public accounts of the kingdom, which commissioners have usually been denominated, the Commissioners of Accounts. These same commissioners, seeing that the parliament had adopted regulations, such as they had recommended, relative to the office of paymaster of the forces, recommended, in one of their subsequent reports, the adoption of similar regulations in the office of the *treasurer of the navy*. The words, which have been once before quoted by me, of the report are as follows: "The legislature have, in the last session of parliament, introduced into the office of the paymaster general of the forces a regulation, which, as it seems to us, may be applied as beneficially to the office of the treasurer of the navy. The custody of cash applicable to the navy services may be transferred from the treasurer to the Bank of *England*, and the account only of the receipts and payments be kept in his office; all the sums now received by him may be received by the Bank; sums from the Exchequer may be imprested to the Bank; sums directed by the letters of the different boards to be paid to him, may be directed to be paid into the Bank; all bills assigned upon him for payment may be paid, and all extra payments may be made by his drafts upon the Bank; the payment of the seamen, the artificers and labourers

in the yards, and the persons in the hospital ships, and on the half-pay lists, must be carried on in the same manner it is now: these men cannot be paid by drafts, they must have cash, and with that cash the pay clerks must be entrusted as they are at present; and the treasurer must continue to be responsible for them, as for officers of his appointment, and under his controul; but this will be no obstruction to the regulation. *The money may be all issued to the pay clerks by the drafts of the treasurer upon the Bank*, according to the requisition of the Navy Board, in like manner as many of the sums are issued at this day; and, upon the death or resignation of a treasurer, the balances of his cash in the Bank, and in the hands of his pay clerks may be struck immediately, and carried over to the account of his successor. In this situation, *the treasurer, neither receiving nor paying public money himself*, can be neither debtor to, nor creditor of the public, *except as far as he may be responsible for his clerks*. On passing his accounts, the bill indorsed, or requisition of the Navy Board, is both his authority and voucher for his draft; the draft indorsed is the voucher for the Bank to prove their payment. If these accounts agree (and they ought frequently to be compared together) it is highly probable that they are both right."—Now, I ask, if any man of common sense, supposing his intentions to be honest, had been required to found an act of parliament upon this, would he not have so worded the act, that it should have prohibited the Treasurer of the Navy, or any one for him, *from ever holding any of the public money in his hands*? Such is the object, which the Commissioners had in view; and, their reason for wishing to see this object accomplished, was, that, by preventing him from holding any of the public money in his hands, he, and all others, would, agreeably to the previous resolution of the House of Commons, be effectually prevented from deriving any profit or advantage from the use of the public money; and, so to prevent him was become quite just and reasonable, because his salary had been augmented to the clear sum of four thousand pounds a year. Under all these circumstances; with the sense of the nation, long and loudly expressed upon the subject; with the resolutions of the House of Commons; with the repeated reports of the Commissioners of accounts; and, lastly, with the Paymaster's bill, as a draft to engross from; with all this before his eyes, Mr. Dundas himself sat down to prepare the act of the

25th Geo. III. cap. 31, according to which he was in future to regulate his conduct, and which we now find he began instantly to violate, continuing in that violation during the whole of the long series of years that he afterwards remained in the office of Treasurer of the Navy. The act has frequently been quoted from, and the substance of its provisions have been stated; but, I think it best here to insert it entire; or all that part of it at least which relates to the custody of the public money.

“ ACT XXV. GEO. III. CAP. 31.

An act for better regulating the Office of the Treasurer of his Majesty's Navy.

WHEREAS it appears, by the reports made by the commissioners appointed to examine, take, and state, the public accounts of the kingdom, that regulations are necessary for better conducting the business in the department of the treasurer of his Majesty's navy; be it therefore enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That, from and after the first day of July, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-five, the treasurer of his Majesty's navy for the time being, in all memorials to be by him presented to the treasury for money for navy services, shall pray that such sum as he requires may be issued to the governor and company of the bank of *England* on his account; and shall transmit with each memorial a copy of the letter or letters from the commissioners of the navy, victualling, and sick and hurt boards, directing him to apply for such sum or sums; in which letter or letters the said commissioners shall, and they are hereby required and directed to specify for what particular service or services the said money is wanted; and shall also state the balances then in the hands of the treasurer of the navy, under each head of service respectively; and the commissioners of his Majesty's treasury for the time being, by their letter from time to time, shall direct the auditor of the exchequer to issue, to the governor and company of the bank of *England*, on account of the treasurer of his Majesty's navy, naming such treasurer for the time being, the sum for which such letter shall be drawn, upon the unsatisfied order at the exchequer in favour of the said treasurer, for which the receipt of the cashier or cashiers of the said governor and company shall be a sufficient discharge; and all sums for which letters of the commissioners of his Majesty's

treasury shall be drawn, shall be issued to the governor and company of the bank of *England*, in like manner as they have been heretofore issued to the treasurer of his Majesty's navy; and all such monies to be issued to the governor and company of the bank of *England*, shall be placed on an account or accounts to be raised in the books of the governor and company of the said bank of *England*, and to be intituled, *The Account of the Treasurer of his Majesty's Navy*, inserting the name of such treasurer for the time being, for the pay branch, cashier's branch, and the victualling branch; and on receipt of all such monies at the exchequer, the treasurer of the navy shall immediately certify to the commissioners of the navy an account of the whole receipt, under the respective heads of service, and shall also certify to the commissioners of the victualling, and sick and hurt boards, the particular sums received, and applicable to those services respectively.

II. And be it further enacted and declared, That no fees whatsoever shall be paid at the exchequer or treasury for or by reason of the transactions aforesaid, beyond the amount of what hath been usually paid upon imprests and accounts hitherto made, according to the former custom of transacting business between the exchequer, navy pay office, and bank, severally.

III. And be it further enacted, That, from and after the first day of *July*, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-five, no money for the service of the navy shall be issued from his Majesty's exchequer to the treasurer of the navy, or shall be placed, or directed to be placed in his hands or possession, but the same shall be issued and directed to be paid to the governor and company of the bank of *England*, and to be placed to the accounts above-mentioned, according to the services for which it is craved and issued.

IV. And be it enacted, That the treasurer of his Majesty's navy for the time being, by himself, or the person or persons in his office duly authorised by the said treasurer, from and after the first day of *July*, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-five, shall draw upon the governor and company of the bank of *England* for all navy services whatever, and shall specify, in each and every draft, the head of service for which the same is drawn; and no draft of the said treasurer, or the person or persons authorised as aforesaid, shall be deemed a sufficient voucher to the said governor and company of the bank of *England*, unless the same specifies the head of service for

which it is drawn, and has been actually paid by the said governor and company of the bank of *England*.

V. Provided always, That the monies to be issued unto the governor and company of the bank of *England*, on account of the treasurer of his Majesty's navy, shall not be paid out of the bank, unless for navy services, and in pursuance of drafts to be drawn on the governor and company of the bank of *England*, and signed by the treasurer of his Majesty's navy for the time being, or the person or persons authorised as aforesaid; in which drafts shall be specified the heads of service to which the sums therein mentioned are to be applied; and which drafts, so drawn, shall be sufficient authority to the bank to pay such money to the persons mentioned in such drafts, or to the bearer of them."

When the reader has perused this act *with attention*, which I beseech him to do, will he believe it possible, that its *intention* could have been *misunderstood* by Mr. Dundas? Mr. Dundas, the person who framed it; the person who was to execute it; the person, who side by side with Mr. Pitt, was pushing on to power, by the means of professions of an earnest desire to promote economy in the expenditure of the public money? The Treasurer's act, observe by the preamble, was founded upon the report of the Commissioners of Accounts; that report recommended regulations in the Navy Treasurer's Office similar to those adopted in the Army Paymaster's office; and, by comparing the two acts it will be found, that, with the exception of names and of circumstances as to which the two offices totally differed, *the words are exactly the same*. One act was, in truth, copied from the other; and, therefore, the conduct of the Army Paymasters, invariably pursued since the pay-office bill was passed, is the strongest possible proof, that Mr. Dundas could not have *misunderstood* the *intention* of the act for the regulation of his office of Treasurer of the Navy. Lord Harrowby went from the Pay-Office to that of Treasurer of the Navy; and, upon his oath, he tells the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry, that, finding a practice prevailing in his new office, which did not prevail in his old office, and knowing *the legal regulations to be the same*, he was led to institute an inquiry into the cause of this difference in the practice of the two offices. He says that sickness prevented him from *completing* his inquiry; but, that he had heard nothing that convinced him, that the practice of Mr. Trotter was at all necessary or useful. Some people think, that his lord-

ship should have been more prompt in putting a stop to such a daring violation of the law; and there are those who wonder why Mr. Bragge did not sooner profit from Lord Harrowby's inquiry, especially as his lordship had had from June, 1800, to November, 1801, to complete that inquiry; after such a space of time taken up in *inquiry*, one might have expected his lordship to inform his successor, Mr. Bragge, of the result; and, though he might *forget* so to do, one might have expected Mr. Bragge (a lawyer, be it remembered) to find out the true intent and meaning of the law, under which he was acting upon his responsibility; one might, surely have expected Mr. Bragge to find out the meaning of this law in a shorter space of time than from November, 1801 to the *Summer* of 1802! That neither Lord Harrowby nor Mr. Bragge *shared*, either directly or indirectly, in Trotter's profits, is evident; but, one cannot help lamenting, that they should, from any considerations whatever, have, for so long a time, permitted the law to be grossly violated by their Deputy; and, still more is one constrained to lament, that Mr. Bragge, even after he put a stop to the violation of the law, *did not dismiss* the person, by whom that violation had been committed. In short (and it is a fact to be kept constantly in mind), though we see two Treasurers succeed Mr. Dundas; though we hear that one of them *instituted an inquiry*, and that both of them *disapproved* of Mr. Trotter's practices, we find, that his practices were never *really put a stop to* 'till the Summer of 1802; that is to say, 'till Lord St. VINCENT *resolved upon instituting that Commission of Inquiry* which has brought all these matters to light. —But, to return to Lord Melville: after what has been said, will any one believe it possible that that person could *misunderstand the intention* of the act of the 25th of the King? Will any one believe that Mr. Pitt, Mr. Canning and the Master of the Rolls could think that he had *misunderstood* its intention? The censured lord has been represented as a person so deeply engaged in matters of higher moment, that he might probably have forgotten all about the *Treasurership of the Navy*; and, it has been endeavoured to hold up Trotter as an artful knave, who had taken advantage of his patron's misplaced confidence. It is certain, that to be at once *President of the Board of Control*, that is to say, very nearly the sovereign of India; *War Secretary of State*; and *Treasurer of the Navy*: it is very certain, that, to fill all these offices at one and the same time is what never would have been attempted by any man but a Dundas or a

Pitt. It was impossible that the duties of them all could be, in a proper manner, discharged by any man upon earth; or, if they could, the offices themselves were of too little importance to have such salaries attached to them. But, what did Mr. Dundas himself say upon this subject, when, in 1797, Mr. Tierney brought forward a set of resolutions describing the several offices and sources of emolument enjoyed by this Briarean statesman? Upon that occasion Mr. Dundas said, that "with regard to the office of Treasurer of the Navy, it had been considered by some as a *sinecure*; but, it had not been so to him. He had attended a great deal to the interest of those whom it was his business to pay—the sailors and those relatives who were to receive their wages; and that, although the bill he brought into parliament was a short one, yet the attention he gave to the subject was very laborious. He spoke handsomely of all the gentlemen in the offices under his direction" [not a word about Jellicoe, or Mr. — who defrauded the Treasurer's office] "for their talents and diligence. He confessed, however, that he could give the House no encouragement to expect any reduction of the public expenditure of his offices: for, he knew not of one single point, in which, consistently with the due discharge of official duty, there could be any retrenchment. He must decline saying any thing of his own talents; but, he could safely lay his hand upon his heart, and declare, that, in no one instance was he conscious of having neglected his public duty." This laying the hand upon the heart is now worn out. Mr. Pitt followed, of course; and he said, that the "labours of his right honourable friend, in the public service, would be adequately estimated only by posterity, after the perusal of the documents which would be left behind him!" Gracious Heaven! how careful a man ought to be of what he says! "What documents trow?" Ah! cruel, cruel Lord Melville! to burn all those precious documents for mere pastime at "Melville Castle," and to leave posterity nothing but the few scraps that are to be traced in the Tenth Report! Posterity may, indeed, find the noble name of Dundas inscribed in Mr. Trotter's accounts; and, it has been suggested, that certain select passages from the Tenth Report should be engraven on that statue, which the people of Edinburgh have voted, and have, probably, begun to erect, to the memory of this bosom friend and inseparable associate of him, to whom the wisemen of London did intend to do a similar

honour. — Mr. Pitt, in the debate just quoted from, was followed by Mr. Wilberforce, who strongly censured the conduct of Mr. Tierney, and who insisted, that, as to Mr. Dundas, "there never was more attention, diligence, and assiduity in any office, than in that over which that right hon. gent. presided. Indeed, he thought him a model for imitation. It was, therefore, not without indignation that he listened to the insinuations thrown out against ministers on this occasion." Scrope Bernard and some others, of that stamp, spoke in the same strain; and, Mr. Tierney, after a reply, in which he did not spare them, saw his motion rejected without a division. Thus it was, that, for twenty years, they proceeded. They rose by professions of reform and economy; and, after they had obtained safe possession of power, they, in the manner above described, stifled every inquiry into their conduct; till, fortunately for the country, Lord St. Vincent resolved to institute the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Wilberforce and Scrope Bernard knew, as well as Mr. Tierney, that Mr. Dundas held three great offices; and, they ought to have known, that he could not discharge the duties of them. Mr. Wilberforce now, perhaps, begins to think that his "indignation" at an attempt to institute an inquiry into the matter was not altogether proper. He must begin to find that he was deceived; that he was misled; that he was made an instrument to shelter abuses and corruption; his conduct on Monday night evinces pretty clearly that he has now discovered his error. — What I have had in view, in this reference to the debate of 15th December, 1797, is, to show the fallacy of that notion, which the endless tribe of the Dundasses and their followers are now endeavouring to propagate; to wit; that all the fault was Trotter's; that "honest Harry Dundas knew nought o' the matter;" and, in fact, that honest Harry hardly knew that he was treasurer of the navy. We find that it was quite the contrary. That he was all vigilance and activity: all life and soul: "all eye, all ear." — But, we are not yet come to the close of the history of the act of parliament, which has been so grossly violated. That act was not a mere official arrangement, introduced by Mr. Dundas, and left to his interpretation, as it has been endeavoured to be represented. The general topic, in which that of this act was included, was thought to be of importance enough to make a prominent feature in the speech from the throne. The King told the parliament, that he "trusted they would take

“ into early consideration the matters suggested in the reports of the Commissioners of Public Accounts, and such further regulations as might appear to be necessary in the different offices of the kingdom.” To which the Commons made the following answer: “ That we are deeply sensible of your Majesty’s paternal goodness and care of your people, in recommending to us, at the same time, a just regard to the economy requisite in every department; a duty which your Majesty’s faithful Commons feel always incumbent upon them, and, at this time, peculiarly indispensable. That we shall also proceed, with as much expedition as possible, to the consideration of the reports of the Commissioners of Accounts, as well as of such further regulations in the different offices of the kingdom, as may appear likely to conduce to the public advantage.” It was not, then, a trifling matter. On the contrary, it was brought forward thus prominently as a powerful means of gaining popularity and insuring the possession of place and emolument. When the bill was introduced there was no debate; nor was there any debate in any of the stages of the bill; but, in a committee of the whole House on that part of His Majesty’s speech relating to the reports of the Commissioners of Accounts, Mr. Pitt described the *intention* of the ministry, and of Mr. Dundas in particular, as to the new regulations about to be introduced into the Office of the Treasurer of the Navy. He began by a high commendation of the Commissioners of Accounts, and besought the legislature to make haste to profit from the valuable lights derived from their reports. Proceeding then to the point in question he said: “ I have the happiness to say, that my right honourable friend, the present Treasurer of the Navy, has, in consequence of the report of the Commissioners on his particular office, taken the whole of the practice and of their suggestions into his most able consideration; and, he has, after much inquiry and deliberate consultation, formed a plan which promises to be effectual. It seems, in his eyes, to have all the ends in view which the Commissioners recommend, and which this House must be eager to pass. It tends to keep down balances in the hands of the Treasurer of the Navy for the time being. . . . The plan is framed upon the suggestion of the Commissioners.” [I beseech the reader to look back at these suggestions.] “ We shall have to simplify the manner of keeping the accounts, and

particularly to remedy, by altering the great source and pretence for delay in the office, the practice of the sub-accountants. Instead of the manner now in use of their receiving money from the Treasurer of the Navy, and holding an account with him, it is suggested by my right hon. friend, that the sub-accountants shall draw, by imprest, and shall have personally to account by the Exchequer. In addition to these means, and to reduce the balances in the hands of the Treasurer of the Navy for the time being, the money is, in future, to be placed in the custody of the Bank of England as is now the custom with the army expenditure.”

Now let any one look at the Pay Office Act inserted above; let him recollect not only what has been since, but what *was at the time*, the invariable practice of the Pay Office, with regard to the custody of the public money; let him recollect what were the objects that the Commissioners of Accounts had in view, and what were their suggestions as to the accomplishing of those objects; and then let him believe, if he can, for one single moment, that Mr. Dundas could misunderstand, or that Mr. Pitt thinks he could have misunderstood, the *intention* of the act, which the Commons have now declared him to have grossly violated. What, then, are we to think of the attempt to soften down, to fritter away, to destroy, in fact, the censure finally passed by that assembly, by substituting the words “ contrary to the intention of the law,” in lieu of “ a gross violation of the law ?”— Thus have we before us all the links of this chain of facts and circumstances. First the people, groaning under the accumulated burdens heaped on them by a lavish expenditure, petition the parliament to retrench that expenditure; secondly, we find the House of Commons appointing commissioners to inquire into the means of effecting such retrenchment; thirdly, we see the House of Commons passing a resolution that the treasurer of the navy and the paymaster of the forces should be suffered to derive no profit from the use or interest of the public money; next, the salaries of those officers are greatly augmented by a warrant of His Majesty, in order to compensate them for the loss of what they formerly made by such use or interest; then comes the act regulating the office of the Paymaster of the forces, which act has been duly executed from the moment it was in force to the present time; after this we find a recommendation of the Commissioners of Accounts recommending a similar act for

the regulation of the Office of Treasurer of the Navy; to give this recommendation the greater weight, and to satisfy the people, that his majesty and his ministers are sincerely solicitous to guard the public treasure from being misapplied, the King, in his speech from the throne, calls the attention of the Commons to the subject; the Commons, in a committee of the whole House, take the matter into their serious consideration, the minister clearly describes the *intention* of the bill about to be submitted, the bill is submitted by the person who is immediately to put it into execution, and, after all this, that very person begins to act, and for sixteen years continues to act, *exactly contrary to the intention* thus solemnly promulgated. And, when the daring violator of the law is at last detected; when a motion of censure on him is proposed in that same assembly, where, with professions of superior purity and of disinterested zeal for the public service, he first stood forward with the draft of that law, then is an attempt made to give to the sense of the House such an expression as to induce the world to believe, that he has disobeyed the law merely because *he did not understand its intention!* To this dilemma, however, are those who take this ground reduced, and this is the point to which I wish to rivet the attention of the reader: either the *intention* of the law and of its framer was such as it was described by Mr. Pitt in the speech above quoted, or it was not. If the former, then has the law been *wilfully* as well as grossly violated: if the latter, then was the law *intended to deceive* the people, the parliament, and the king, and, under the garb of reform, to carry on the work of corruption. Which of these Lord Melville and his friend may choose, is, to me, and, I believe, to the public in general, a matter of perfect indifference; but, one of the two it is impossible for them to avoid.—I cannot dismiss this part of the subject without an endeavour to direct the attention of the reader, for one moment, towards the general conduct of Messrs. Pitt and Dundas, at the time when this law was passed. We all recollect, that *reform*, the *name* of the reform, was the ladder by means of which they attained the summit of political rank and power. Yet, observe, how different was their conduct from that of their opponents! It was during the short administration of Lord Rockingham, and while Mr. Fox was Secretary of State, that the resolution of the 18th of June, 1782, was passed. It was during the short administration of the Duke of Portland, Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, &c. that the Pay Office

Act was passed; that act from which Mr. Dundas copied the Navy Treasurership Act. Mr. Burke, immediately began to put the former act in *execution*, and thereby effected a *real* reform, and set an example of integrity and obedience to the law, which example has, in the Paymaster's office, been invariably followed to the present day. Mr. Dundas copied the act, but he took good care not to copy the conduct of the celebrated framer. He took good care never to put the act in execution. *That* was not wanted. The act had answered its purpose when it had furnished the occasion for making professions, and had thereby gained an addition of popularity. The violation of this law has been gross, it has been daring, shameful, scandalous; but, insulting and injurious as it has been to the people of this country, and deadly as is the wound which it is calculated to give to the government itself, still it is not a thousandth part so hateful as the hypocrisy with which it has all along been accompanied. It not only came forth in the guise of reform; but the day, on which its approach was first announced, was chosen for the making of a solemn profession of political purity; principles of more than Spartan severity were proclaimed; a general denunciation against defaulters and peculators of every description, and down to a size the most minute, was made; places granted even by *patent* from the Crown were declared not to be sheltered from the curtailings and suppressive power of parliament. And here I cannot refrain from quoting the remark, made at the time by Mr. Fox, upon this last mentioned effusion of remorseless virtue. "I know perfectly well," said he, "that it always has been, and always will be unpopular for any man to hold an opinion such as I hold, and as I ever will avow upon this subject; but, in spite of the unpopularity that will attend such a declaration, I scruple not to say, that I will never on any account give my consent to touch any part of the emoluments deriveable under a grant from the Crown." Here we have the characters of the two men in epitome. Mr. Fox has been thought *indiscreet* for pursuing a line of public conduct so widely different from that of his antagonist; but, in contests for political fame it is the same as in contests in arms: those who are victors at the end of the war justly claim the superiority. Mr. Pitt chose popularity for the pedestal of his ambition; it is always "a weak foundation, slippery and unsure;" but he chose the very worst sort of it; he

chose to build upon the base and sordid passions of the people; their envy of the great, their love of money, their indiscriminate suspicions of the integrity of public men. These were the passions on which he rose, and..... Oh, God! how just, how wise, how appropriate, are all thy judgments!—Want of room obliges me to postpone the remaining points, on which I intended to remark; I, therefore, conclude, for the present, with expressing a hope, that the value of the materials which I have brought together, will, in some degree, compensate for the opposite quality which, I am afraid, will appear but too obvious in the comment.

* * In the foregoing sheet of this work, page 543, the quotations, there made, are said to be taken from speeches of Mr. Pitt, delivered in the year 1801. It should have been 1781.

[The following letter was communicated to me last week, though too late for insertion in the preceding sheet. It has since appeared in another public print; but, as the writer sent it to me in manuscript, and may wish to have it inserted in this work, I think it a mark of respect, justly due both to himself and his performance, to insert it here.]

LORD MELVILLE'S LAST LETTER.

The charge is, that his lordship acted in violation of a clear law, and in breach of his duty as Treasurer of the Navy.

1. In withdrawing large sums of money from the Bank, when not needed for the services of the navy, and permitting those sums to be lodged with a private banker on the private accounts of Mr. Trotter.

2. In applying money appropriated to naval services to other purposes not disclosed, but said to have been public purposes, and the money refunded.

3. In allowing Mr. Trotter to turn the public money to his private advantage, by speculations or investments in the Funds, &c.

4. In deriving a profit or advantage to himself by this traffic.

To the three first Lord Melville pleads guilty, or he acknowledges the facts, though he denies or palliates the inference.—It is only to the matter of the last article that his letter relates. Lord Melville says, or wishes the public to consider him as saying, that he derived no advantage from Mr. Trotter's having the use of the public money, or from the profits confessedly made of it, except, *perhaps*, that Mr. Trotter was thereby enabled to advance money for his lordship's

private concerns, which he might otherwise not have been able to do, but that his lordship did not know, at the time, that such advances were made out of the public money. It was not till the 5th of November last that he learned the case might possibly be so; he is not yet absolutely certain as to the fact, because Mr. Trotter's private money was blended with that of the public, in the account at his banker's, and the advances made out of the aggregate sum. He considered the advances made on his account, by Mr. Trotter, just as if they had been made by any other agent employed in the management of his private affairs. He considered himself as debtor to Mr. Trotter, if the balance, on the whole account, at the close, was in his favour.—If we suppose this representation candid and unequivocal. If Lord Melville really derived no profit or advantage from Mr. Trotter's operations other than that which the letter desires us to believe, would his lordship, would any man of common sense, who had the least regard for his character, or the opinion of the world, have hesitated to answer the question put to him by the Commissioners? Would he have declined answering, and given as his reason that he was not obliged to *criminate* himself? Where was the *criminality* upon his present state of the case in receiving pecuniary accommodation from Mr. Trotter, believing that it came from the private pocket of that gentleman? Where was the criminality in having received that accommodation under such belief, though he discovered before his examination that it was the public money which possibly, or probably, though not certainly, constituted the fund, or part of the fund, out of which the advances were made, those advances being afterwards refunded, or all along *bona fide* intended to be repaid?—Another striking circumstance is the time Lord Melville has taken for his justification. The contents of the report, and the conclusions drawn by the commissioners, and which every man must have drawn from his declining to answer, and the ground assigned for it, must have been known to him for months. The public obloquy under which he has laboured, ever since the report appeared, he cannot have been ignorant of. And yet the *plain tale* he had to tell was reserved till the eve of his trial.—When guilt is to be proved by circumstances, the conduct of the accused generally furnishes the strongest evidence. Did an innocent man ever refuse to answer?—Is he not eager to seize the earliest, and every opportunity, to assert his innocence? Without any great breach of charity, one is led to suspect that

his lordship has lately received the hint from some ingenious friend, that use might be made of the slight circumstance disclosed by Mr. Trotter, as to the blending of the public money with his own.—But if Lord Melville truly derived no advantage or profit from, and had no share in the gain made by the use of the public money: what is to be said for Mr. Trotter? Is it credible that he would not have been anxious to exculpate his patron and benefactor? Whether Lord Melville participated in the gain, made no difference as to his own criminality. That he had gained was admitted—that he had acted with Lord Melville's permission and knowledge was avowed. His lordship's character was at stake if any suspicion of his participating was created or allowed to exist. Mr. Trotter could not fail to be aware that declining to answer the question, whether he actually participated, was equal in the judgment of the public, though not at the Old Bailey, to direct affirmance of the fact. Mr. Trotter refusing to answer the question, whether his lordship derived any profit or advantage? was therefore, if the facts stood as he now desires the public to believe, highly injurious to Lord Melville—it was *diabolical*. And yet this man continues Paymaster of the Navy.—But this need not enter deeply into consideration at present. To any one who attends to Lord Melville's letter, it will be evident that he has not ventured roundly to assert that he derived no profit or advantage from the gains he knew Mr. Trotter was making, which he permitted him to make by the use of the public money. The letter is drawn up with art and caution, and may impose for a moment on superficial readers, but the practitioners of the law know, that it is bad policy to make an affidavit unless it is complete, the inference being, that if you could have exculpated yourself in every article, in every view of the case, you would have done it. Omission is admission.—Lord Melville says there was no contract between him and Mr. Trotter, express or implied, for sharing the gains, and that those gains were exclusively Mr. Trotter's own. But his lordship admits (as it could not be denied) that large sums were advanced to or for him by Mr. Trotter, and he has not said that those sums were repaid, and if repaid when that happened. Did his lordship and Mr. Trotter, his agent, never settle their account current, which the letter states to have existed?—Has his lordship preserved these accounts, or did he commit them to the flames along with other useless papers during his retirement in Scotland?—

If his lordship was so careless, will it be believed that Mr. Trotter was equally careless?—Let me suppose two cases—
1. A. and B. are highwaymen; equal sharers in the plans and the danger, and by contract, express, or understood, equal in the division of the plunder.—2. B. is the active person who takes the road. A. only furnishes the horse, the pistol and shot; he receives a part of the booty by way of loan—certain this B. cannot peach but at the risk of his own neck. He is withal so much of the gentleman, and has so much confidence in B. that he takes whatever B. pleases to give him, without asking a question as to the particular exploit which produced the money, satisfied generally as to the way in which it must have come.—A. and B. are both guilty. The law says equally guilty—the public will declare A. the most guilty of the two.

The following verses are taken from the Morning Chronicle of the 6th instant. I am sure that those who may have read them before will thank me for the repetition.

THE TEARS OF THE CREWETS,

ON TAXING

SALT AND VINEGAR.

Two sulky *Salt-Cellars* contrived to meet
A pensive *Pepper-Box* in Downing street,
And there convened in factious consultation
The motley *Crewets* of Administration
Old MELVILLE'S *Mustard-Pot* refused to come;
Haggis and Trotters kept him close at home;
PITT'S peevish *Vinegar* made no delay,
Nor the smooth tasteless *Oil* of CASTLE-REACH;
The *Sugar-Caster* WILBERFORCE supplied,
And preached like POULUX by his *Ca-tor's* side;
Much *Salt* complained, much *Vinegar* deplored,
The Tax that forc'd them from the Paper's board:
Much curs'd the Country Gentlemen, whose bags
Shrunk at the Taxing of the Farmers' Nags,
Who left poor *Vinegar*, like Mum and Malt,
To share the grievances endur'd by Salt—
Not attic Salt, for BILLY PITT they knew
Had not an ounce of that 'mong all his crew:
Curs'd Old GEORGE ROSE, who stated from his Cook
How little Salt his Hampshire bacon took—
Salt to his porridge GEORGE had got before,
Nor car'd what suff'rings public porridge bore!
“What honest humble Sauce can long enjoy
“His fair security (cried gloomy Soy);
“Catchup, perchance, may 'scape the luck'less hour
“So many mushrooms now have place and pow'r;
“Finance's pettyfogging pickling plan
“May strike at Onions, and excise Klan;
“While stamped and annual licence must be got
“For all who relish Garlic or Chalot.
“Poor BARTO VALLE, melancholy BURGESS!
“Victims of PITT and HUSKISSON and STURGES!
“Ah! look not sour, for PITT, serene and placid,
“May tax sour looks, that universal acid!
“Ah! drop no Tear, for BILLY won't relax—
“And Tears are Salt, and liable to Tax!”
So wail'd the Crewets, till the Meeting clos'd,
This Resolution Salt at last propos'd—
“That Vinegar and He should jointly sport
“A new *Sauce-piquante* for the Tenth Report.”